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THE EDUCATIONAL FRONT SHOULD CONSIDER SUPPORT OF
AGRICULTURE AS THE MOST GLORIOUS TASK

By Liu Yang-chiao

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FOREWORD

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THE EDUCATIONAL FRONT SHOULD CONSIDER SUPPORT OF
AGRICULTURE AS THE MOST GLORIOUS TASK

[The following is a translation of an article written by Secretary Liu Yang-chiao, Hupeh Provincial Party Committee, in Kuang-ming Jih-pao, Peiping, 9 October 1960, page 2.]

In its clarion calls for launching the 'increased production and austerity campaign', especially in regard to steel and grain, and for mobilizing the entire Party and the entire people to undertake huge development of agriculture and huge production of grain, the Central Committee of the Party has immediately received enthusiastic reaction from the entire people.

At present, the popular campaign for vast development of agriculture and vast production of grain has been launched in Hupeh Province in a grand and heroic manner and is undergoing deeper and more practical development. In this great popular campaign, the educational battlefield should regard assistance to agricultural production as its most glorious political task. The great practices involved in the building of socialism have made people on the educational front receive an extremely profound education. People gradually realize that the fundamental plan for the building of socialism in China is the plan proposed by Mao Tse-tung, which specifies that agriculture should be used as the foundation, that industry should serve as the guide, and that the priority development of heavy industry should be integrated with the rapid development of agriculture. Consequently, people gradually realize the deep significance of strengthening agriculture. Schools should regard assistance to agriculture not only as a solemn political problem but also as a step forward in carrying out a fundamental problem of the Party's educational plan.

We note with enthusiasm that since the educational revolution was launched in 1958 schools of all levels and all kinds have incessantly undergone profound changes. At present, education must serve the politics of the proletariat, must integrate with productive labor, and must be directed by

the Party and grasped by the people so as to constitute a powerful material force.

Since the educational revolution was launched, schools of all levels and all kinds have daily heightened their consciousness in assisting agriculture. They have done considerable work by directly participating in agricultural production and promoting development in science, technology, and culture. They have demonstrated a definite influence in speeding up agricultural production, promoting improvement in agricultural technology, raising the cultural and technological level of the peasants, and gradually developing the minds of the workers and peasants.

On the other hand, through assistance to agriculture, not only the political thinking of the schools has undergone drastic changes, the quality of education has also been improved. The profound changes constantly occurring in the schools are inseparable from the various activities of the great student-teacher combination which, following the deepening of the educational revolution and in accordance with the requirements of socialist construction as well as with the principle of integrating education with productive labor, has ceaselessly and systematically cast itself into the industrial and agricultural battle front to engage directly in productive labor and to serve agricultural production.

From the political thoughts of the socialist revolution and from the revolutionary practices of socialist construction, the great student-teacher combination has in varying degrees become aware that the problem of world view [weltanschauung] is positively a most fundamental problem. If the problem of world view is not settled, it is impossible to talk of integrating education with productive labor or realizing the Communist educational principle of combining theory with practice, and it follows as a matter of course that the people trained in the schools cannot really become awakened and cultured workers.

Participation in agricultural production is one of the most effective measures for heightening Communist consciousness and for establishing the Marxist-Leninist world view. It is also a most effective measure for conquering the serious phenomenon of the 'three separations' that formerly existed in the schools. Consequently, it has become one of the glorious duties of the educational battle front to assist agriculture in various ways. Avoiding the agricultural battle front and adopting an unconcerned attitude toward agricultural production should be regarded as a manifestation of a lack of enthusiasm toward the socialist revolution and socialist construction; and this manifestation

is inseparable from the non-Communist position, point of view, and method.

For this reason, after the Central Committee of the Party issued its clarion call for mobilizing the entire Party and the entire people to engage in huge development of agriculture and huge production of grain-stuff, a new tide has arisen in the educational battle front for assisting agriculture and new problems have also emerged. These problems are crying for further settlement, otherwise it is impossible to meet the immediate and long-term demands of agricultural production, and the problem of further improving the quality of education will also be adversely affected. The fore-mentioned new tide has appeared in various fields.

Firstly, graduates of agricultural middle schools, actuated by a high degree of revolutionary fervor and embracing far-sighted ideals, have gone to the first line of agricultural production. They want to demonstrate their ability in this wide world. Although their number is not great, they constitute a body of new strength, and may accomplish a great deal. A portion of the graduates of the full-time primary schools in the rural districts have also responded to the call of the Party. They remain in the rural districts. They offer their youth to the glorious agricultural battle front, and regard the construction of new socialist villages as their own lofty ideal.

A number of educated youths in the cities and a number of older students who have reached the working age have also wanted to join the first line of agricultural production and take up glorious positions there to work for their Fatherland. When youths bubbling with fresh energy join the first line of agricultural production, they will undoubtedly produce positive effects in strengthening the battle front of agricultural production, and in raising the cultural and technological level of the members of the rural communes. All this has immense significance not only in settling the outstanding problem of labor tension in the battle front of agricultural production, but also in destroying the 'three discrepancies' during the future transition into communism. To underestimate this significance is a mistake.

Secondly, we note that the full-time middle schools and primary schools in the rural districts have changed their vacation system in order to adapt to the needs of the agricultural season. They have their vacation during the rush period of the agricultural season, so that students and teachers can go together to the first line of agricultural production and participate in agricultural productive labor. During the rush period, the full-time middle schools and

primary schools in the cities have also begun in earnest to participate in agricultural productive labor in the suburban areas. In the colleges and universities, students and teachers have organized themselves in a more systematic fashion to participate in agricultural productive labor. Apart from directly joining the first line of agricultural production, they have extended their assistance to the agricultural battle front in various ways, striving to make more contributions toward the rapid development of agricultural production.

In accordance with the demand for vast development of agriculture and huge production of grain, they have started the study of science in a comprehensive manner and with various emphasis. They undertake to sum up the productive experiences of the masses and search for the rules of agricultural production. They supply technological data and data concerning natural resources so as to further the development of agricultural production. They also employ various ways and means to train technological cadres for agriculture and to popularize scientific and technological knowledge. In all these various phases of activity, there has now emerged a new look. This has immense significance in promoting agricultural production and deepening the educational revolution. To underestimate this significance is a mistake.

Furthermore, we also note that apart from directly assisting agriculture in various ways, schools of all levels and all kinds have followed the principle of integrating education with productive labor and the spirit of cooperation and integration and, in the course of making over-all plans for productive labor, have considered the planting of vegetables and the production of supplementary foodstuff as an important phase of their normal labor. This also has great significance in fostering the habits of labor among students and teachers, toning up school life, and rendering it possible to lower the supply [by the government] of supplementary foodstuff to the schools.

Finally, we note that certain schools, following the Party's plan of integrating education with productive labor, now go to the rural districts to establish schools. This is a kind of long-term strategic preparation which, in order to be appreciated, must be related to the principles of accelerating the building of socialism and effecting the transition to Communism.

What has been said in the foregoing paragraphs shows that the principle of integrating education with productive labor has been carried out one step further and that, particularly, the integration of education with agricultural

productive labor has had new development. This is a great event worthy of our excitement and exultation. It should be regarded as a new victory won under the glorious light of the three red banners, namely, the general Party line, the "Great Leap Forward," and the people's communes. In order to consolidate and extend this victory, we must really solve the new problems brought forward by the new tide. We should concentrate our attention especially on solving the following problems.

The first problem is to strengthen education that is based on agriculture. It should be made clear from the standpoint of both theory and practice that "placing agriculture in the priority position and mobilizing the entire Party and the entire people to engage in huge development of agriculture and huge production of grain is not a temporary expedient but is a fairly long-term strategic plan in the course of building socialism in our country," and "correctly reflects the objective rules and demands of economic development." People should be made to realize that to carry out this plan is the political task of the entire Party and the entire people. They should also be able to realize that "development of agriculture is a glorious enterprise, and agricultural labor is glorious labor. Agricultural labor is not only the great enterprise of building new socialist villages, but also an extremely important part of the enterprise of building socialism as a whole."

It cannot be denied that not only in schools of all levels and all kinds are there people who despise labor, especially agricultural labor; in the rural areas, too, there are people who are influenced by the thinking of the bourgeoisie and who despise labor, especially agricultural labor. There are also people who consider engagement in agricultural labor as having no prospects in the future.

At present, in the colleges there are elements of the intelligentsia who are not interested in labor and only speak of the 'fine points' (chien-tuan). In the full-time middle schools and primary schools in the rural districts, there are also people who turn their face toward the cities as soon as they enter middle school, thinking that once they become cultured they cannot remain in the rural districts to engage in agricultural production. Not only do students have this kind of thinking; some of their teachers and parents also teach them to think that way. For instance, right now when some young students enthusiastically rush to the agricultural battle front, they on the one hand are fervently greeted by the great peasant masses, but on the other hand are coldly received and derided by certain reactionary

and backward elements who think education is for the purpose of escaping the physical labor in the rural districts and enjoying what is called the happy life in the cities.

In order to conquer this kind of erroneous viewpoint, it is necessary to push forward the task of education in Communist thought. Without education in Communist thought and without the struggle of destroying the wealthy and elevating the poor, it is impossible to solve the problem. And without solving this problem, there cannot be any basic solution of the thoughts of making agriculture as the foundation. Therefore, we educationalists must treat this problem in relation to the high principles of Communism.

In order to push the educational revolution to the limit, it is necessary to strengthen the task of political thought in various ways and teach people to ardently love labor, ardently love the rural districts, ardently love the peasants, and ardently love agricultural labor, so as the better to carry out the plan of making education serve the politics of the proletariat and integrating education with productive labor. We should advance farther and from the standpoint of thought solve the conflict between mental labor and physical labor, striving to make the intelligentsia love labor and to make the worker-peasant masses cultivate knowledge. We should firmly establish the materialistic viewpoint that physical labor is the first necessity of life in every kind of human society, and clearly set forth that agricultural labor is the source of food and clothing in every age. We should criticize those erroneous and anti-Marxist-Leninist viewpoints which maintain that the advent of communist society will eliminate physical labor and that in the forthcoming communist society even what people eat and wear will rely on chemical industries and agricultural labor will disappear.

In order to establish the materialistic viewpoint that physical labor and agricultural labor cannot be eliminated, it is necessary to understand that without physical labor it is not only impossible to talk of creating material wealth but even impossible to have culture. Physical labor is forever the first necessity of human society. Physical labor is the most glorious thing. The viewpoint that considers physical labor as despicable is the viewpoint of the exploiting class. In the period of socialist revolution and socialist construction, that kind of viewpoint is the revelation of bourgeois ideology. It also explains the life-and-death ideological struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat pending the emergence of communist society. If that kind of viewpoint is allowed to operate freely, if the socialist revolution of thought is not carried out to the limit, then it is impossible to ensure that socialist construction

will carry on smoothly.

In the course of the mass movement of huge development of agriculture and huge production of grain by the entire Party and the entire people, a small number of young people make the mistake of being reluctant to remain in the rural districts. They despise agriculture. They despise the thoughts about agricultural labor. They should be corrected. Labor education should deal with the 'three discrepancies,' and undertake a long and arduous task. This way of strengthening thought education based on agriculture has a deeper and more far-reaching significance. No matter from the standpoint of destroying the discrepancy between mental labor and physical labor, or the discrepancy between the cities and rural districts, or the discrepancy between industry and agriculture, it will produce considerable effects.

Secondly, we should further, and in a comprehensive manner, solve a series of concrete problems brought forward under the best of circumstances. We should do this in accordance with the policy line of the Party as well as the needs of today and tomorrow, taking into consideration the speed of development, the planning of the schools, and the school system. We should note that pending the modernization of agriculture, the phenomenon of labor tension in the agricultural battle front cannot be finally solved.

On the other hand, the modernization of agriculture urgently needs a scientific and technological culture. Without a substantial number of young men possessing culture and technological knowledge, it is impossible to modernize agriculture. The two are mutually supplementary and mutually promoting. Here we should bring out, on the one hand, the problem of eliciting as much as possible the labor potential to strengthen the first line of agriculture and, on the other hand, the over-all problem of how to simultaneously attend to the characteristics of education and the long-term needs of socialist construction.

To tackle these problems, it is necessary to make arrangement for a number of middle school and primary school graduates who have reached the working age to participate in agricultural production and at the same time to organize them and send them to spare-time schools to continue their studies so as to raise their level of culture and scientific and technological knowledge. This arrangement is important for strengthening agricultural production, for promoting the intelligentsia's love of labor, for making the worker-peasant masses cultivate knowledge, and for gradually eliminating the three discrepancies. For this reason we should encourage and support those students who, after graduation, are

willing to participate in agricultural production.

As regards those middle school and primary school graduates who cannot continue their studies, we should advise them to remain in the rural districts to take part in agricultural production, and make them realize that in the 'wide world' of the rural districts there are lots of things to be done which require educated youths to demonstrate their abilities. We should make clear to them that the basic aim of proletarian education is to promote the incessant development of social production and raise the efficiency of productive labor of society. Continuing studies in a higher educational institution and raising the political and cultural level is also for the purpose of being better able to participate in productive labor and socialist construction. It is, therefore, a glorious thing for students who cannot continue their studies to rush to the first line of agricultural production.

Youths of the Mao Tse-tung era should only integrate their future with the urgent needs of socialist construction and go to the forefront of construction, to the first line of agricultural production. Only in so doing will they escape insulting the glorious name of youths of the Mao Tse-tung era. Fundamentally, all graduates of the agricultural middle schools should remain in the rural districts to participate in agricultural production. Furthermore, agricultural middle schools should regard labor education as an important portion of the basic content of Communist education, enabling the students to receive education not only from the classroom lectures but also from various kinds of labor which would affect their thoughts, emotions, techniques, and habits, thereby really training a new generation of workers capable of reforming the world and constructing a new countryside. For this purpose we should further carry out the principle of part-time work and part-time study.

The matter of part-time work and part-time study should be approached not mechanically but from the total point of view. Taking into consideration the characteristic that agricultural production has a strong seasonal and regional nature, we should plan productive labor and study in a more rational manner. Some regions have adopted the rule of "more production during the agricultural rush season, and more study during the agricultural slack season." This is the right thing to do.

What has been said above is one aspect of the problem. Another aspect is that to meet the needs of national construction, the present full-time middle schools and primary schools should be maintained as full-time and should concentrate efforts on developing a number of good schools with certain

educational emphases. Therefore, the cultural and educational battle front should be classified according to the strength or weakness of Party direction within each school and according to the different conditions of the political thoughts and the cultural and professional levels of the teachers, so as to study further the concrete step of pushing forward the pedagogical reform. However, all kinds of schools should stop admitting students who have reached the working age and passed the school age, for such admission will take away a portion of productive labor, prevent the strengthening of the agricultural battle front, and keep out a number of children who have reached school age and should go to school.

All schools of whatever kind should also allocate properly the time for agricultural labor, shorten the winter and the summer vacation, and declare holidays during the agricultural rush period. Furthermore, all schools should firmly and in a comprehensive manner execute the Party's educational plan and the principle of integrating work and leisure, striving to improve the quality of education.

Thirdly, for the purpose of carrying out further the Party's educational plan, making a better solution of the problem of linking theory with practice, and promoting the educational mission of higher education, colleges and universities should--apart from continuing to give mighty assistance to agriculture in the fields of labor, science and technology--make plans to send a number of cadres to help the work of the rural districts in accordance with the instructions of the Party's provincial committee and seriously study the new problems in the course of socialist construction.

In the schools, it is also necessary to strengthen further education in Marxism-Leninism and labor education and raise the Communist consciousness of the students and teachers, so as to enable them to realize that during the period of socialist revolution and socialist construction, if they do not reform their thought and cast away the old remnants, and if they do not study the new problems and accept the new things, they will be separated from the masses and cast by time into the background. If they do not like to fall behind time, they must make efforts in accordance with the new situation and the new demands. Therefore, we must note that although one of the outstanding major tasks of colleges and universities is to fiercely attack the 'fine points' and to establish the grand ambition of conquering the 'fine points,' yet it is necessary in the course of the fierce attack to present before the people the problem of

reforming the world view and to seriously wipe out the effects of capitalism, individualism, and idealism.

It must be made clear that while we want to scale the peak of science, yet we oppose the viewpoint of regarding the intelligentsia as a superior class; while we want to fiercely attack the 'fine points,' yet we oppose the thoughts of the intelligentsia that are influenced by the 'fine points'; while we strive to study the basic theories and to grasp the rules of science, yet we must come down from the throne of the 'bourgeois kingdom' that lurks in the deep recesses of the heart, and face the masses, face realities, and by means of the Marxist-Leninist standpoint and approach make contacts with the throbbing pulse of social life. Therefore, in the course of the struggle against people with the 'fine points,' we must without exception strengthen labor education, systematically send those people to engage in agricultural labor, and should not let them stand outside the campaign for huge development of agriculture and huge production of grain by the entire Party and the entire people.

Fourthly, we must note that after strengthening the first line of agricultural production, the policy and program of the Party will be grasped by the masses and the consciousness of the cadres and the masses will be heightened. Following the development of agricultural production and the rational arrangement of the productive life, the problem of integrating work and leisure will be further solved, and the masses will then make further and urgent demands for the study of scientific and technological culture. Then the question as to how to carry out the plan of "making the two legs walk" will rise, and the problem of developing a good system of spare-time education will inevitably stand out prominently.

After a large number of educated youths join the first line of agricultural production, they will, on the one hand and apart from strengthening that first line, introduce culture to the rural districts; and on the other hand will inevitably feel the necessity of raising the cultural, scientific, and technological level for the construction of a new countryside and will consequently make demands to continue to raise that level. The masses and their demands are all reasonable, and we should solve reasonably the problems they raise. For this reason, while tackling such matters as production, life, and thought, we must at the same time tackle spare-time education and the elimination of illiteracy. We should realize that spare-time education should not conflict with production because the principles of spare-

timetime education are, first, not to interfere with production and, secondly, not to interfere with sleep.

Spare-time education operates in accordance with the principle of integrating work with leisure and serves to satisfy the demands of the masses for cultural life. It should not be an obstacle to production. It should benefit production. If spare-time education does not proceed with the promotion of production as its starting point, and is carried on during the period for production, thereby depriving production of a portion of its time, the principles of spare-time education will be violated and the education will be separated from the masses. If we force the masses to attend lectures during the time when they must rest, spare-time education will also be separated from the masses and will become a kind of formalism. All this not only will be detrimental to production and rest but is bound to interfere with the development of spare-time education.

However, subject to the conditions that it will not interfere with production and with sleep, spare-time education must under no circumstances be neglected but should be persistently undertaken in various intelligent ways and in accordance with the demands of production and with some over-all plan. Right now is the time for strengthening the agricultural battle front, economizing labor power, and consolidating the first line of production. There is a greater need for an over-plan of spare-time education. Therefore, we must firmly and in a comprehensive manner carry out the Party's plan of 'walking on two legs,' and must strengthen the leadership of spare-time education. In this winter and in coming spring, the task of eliminating illiteracy must be launched with might and main.

Finally, another point that should be brought out is that while a satisfactory solution of the above problems naturally relies on the over-all planning and unified leadership of the Party committees at various levels, the key problem lies in strengthening the Party organization in the schools. If schools do not have a strong nucleus of Party leadership, all is beneath discussion. Therefore, when we concentrate on solving these problems, we must seriously adjust school organization, strengthen the Party leadership in the schools, and strengthen the constructive task of the Party as the educational revolution constantly deepens. Under the leadership of the Party, we must also strengthen the training of teachers and raise the teacher's political, cultural, and professional level, so as to meet the demands of socialist construction under the best circumstances.